



St. Matthew's  
EPISCOPAL CHURCH  
Madison, Alabama



# Welcome

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**W**e give thanks for the community God has gathered here, for the generations who shaped our parish, and for the new spiritual life unfolding among us. Since 1991, St. Matthew's has welcomed neighbors from a wide variety of faith backgrounds. We are built upon Episcopal tradition infused with an open-hearted spirit. Our fellowship shapes how we live out our faith together. We pray faithfully for God to direct our next rector to St. Matthew's and to guide St. Matthew's to our next rector.

We give thanks for the clergy, lay leaders, and parishioners who built our foundation, and we look forward with hope to the next chapter of spiritual and communal growth. Wherever God leads us next, we move forward together, grateful for the past, energized for the future, and confident that the Holy Spirit continues to guide St. Matthew's.



*Almighty and everliving God, ruler of all things in heaven and earth, hear our prayers for this parish family.  
Strengthen the faithful, arouse the careless, and restore the penitent.  
Grant us all things necessary for our common life, and bring us all to be of one heart and mind  
within your holy Church; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.*





# History

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The Episcopal presence in Madison began in the mid-1980s with the Church of Our Savior. In 1991, Rev. Michael Cleckler led the establishment of St. Matthew's Episcopal Church. A generous volunteer effort helped transform a warehouse into our first sanctuary. From our beginning, the parish featured strong lay leadership, meaningful formation programs, and an authentically welcoming energy.

We broke ground on our first dedicated sanctuary, followed by its inaugural worship service in the summer of 1998. The parish witnessed its greatest period of physical expansion and growth in infrastructure, under the leadership of the Rev. Steve Gruman. We added modular classrooms and enhanced Christian education programs. We built a new and expanded sanctuary and repurposed the original into a meeting hall.

We completed the Christian Ed Building in 2016. This marked an important milestone and expanded our capacity for ministries, gatherings, and outreach.

During Chris Hartley's tenure, St. Matthew's established our Endowment Fund. This further strengthens our long-term stability and demonstrates our commitment to growth and stewardship. Recent seasons reflected the broader realities of the Episcopal Church. They brought blessings and challenges amid shifting perspectives and evolving expectations of church life. We navigated a season marked by change and challenge, impacting our sense of shared direction. We are blessed with our current interim leadership. They are beacons lighting our path as we regain our footing and refocus on Christ's call to unity.



*He Answered, "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind"; and , 'Love your neighbor as yourself"*

LUKE 10:27





## St. Matthew's Today

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St. Matthew's Episcopal Church is a warm and welcoming community, living out our faith through worship, fellowship, and service. We are guided by the Holy Spirit and rooted in our Anglican heritage of tradition, reason, and Scripture. Our parish family includes people of all ages and varied backgrounds, drawn together by a shared love of God and each other.

To keep our faith alive and growing, we are committed to attracting a new generation of families while we continue to honor the wisdom of our active, long-standing members. We aspire not only for numerical growth, but to also cultivate authentic honesty. We need to recognize that becoming a truly welcoming parish requires converting our good intentions into actions. We strive to practice hospitality and inclusion daily. Our mission is to ensure that everyone we welcome experiences genuine relationships, shared ministry, and true belonging.

The wide range of ages and perspectives within our parish fuels our practice of hospitality.

Our hope for the future is to steadfastly help God's love flourish in all our communities. We look to expand our ministries, improve our financial resources, and continue to improve our physical space. At our core, we remain committed to our simple mission: to walk with Jesus, be with Jesus, and let Him be known.

# Our Children and Youth

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St. Matthew's loves the exuberance, honesty, and joy that children and youth bring to our parish family. Their presence is integral to our life together, a defining element of our identity. We encourage children and youth ages eight and up to participate in the liturgy by serving as acolytes and joining age-appropriate ministries. From the weekly children's homily—an element we hope to reinstate soon—to the family-focused Christmas Eve service, we place children at the front and center of our services.

We have a dedicated group of staff members and a team of volunteers, all trained in the Diocesan youth protection policies. Through the efforts of this incredible team,

children remain squarely at the heart of our parish life. Our youth produce an incredible impact within our community, enthusiastically manifesting our mission through their activities. They actively advance our commitment to cultivate love through authentic connection.

We continue to benefit from the 2016 renovations, which expanded our nursery and provided additional children's classrooms. We are eager to welcome more young families into our parish. Children and youth actively shape our present today, and they are the future of our thriving parish tomorrow.





## Outreach

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St. Matthew's outreach ministries, driven by the call to love God and love our neighbors, reach across every walk of life—locally, regionally, and globally. We support our unhoused neighbors through partnerships with First Stop and the Huntsville/North Alabama Continuum of Care. We provide food, resources, and care for individuals and families facing hardship through the Huntsville Assistance Program, the Food Bank of North Alabama, Enable Madison County, and Crisis Services. We care for young people and families through our commitment to children's programs at Friends of the 400, Sawyerville Summer Camp, and Madison Interfaith Council.

Beyond our local community, teams from St. Matthew's have served in Kenya, Belize, and Puerto Rico. We assist global ministries like Episcopal Relief & Development, Lift Up the Vulnerable, and the Ukrainian Fellowship of the Rolling Pin Craft and Bake sale. We have a parishioner serving as a missionary to Kenya. She started Lauren's Creative Corner, bringing art and therapy for children of the region. We share Christ's love with those affected by incarceration through Kairos Inside and Kairos Outside. In every outreach effort, St. Matthew's seeks to live out Christ's call to love our neighbors as ourselves—with open hands, generous hearts, and joyful spirits.

*“Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying, “Whom shall I send? And who will go for us?” And I said, “Here am I. Send me !”*

ISAIAH 6:8

# Ministries

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**M**inistries and community life are the heartbeat of St. Matthew's, an extension of our commitment to loving our neighbors. Together, we build a congregation where all can grow in faith, find friendship, and deepen their sense of belonging.

Our ministries demonstrate the spirit of our church community: welcoming, cheerful, eager to serve, and grounded in the Gospel.

They encompass the breadth of parish life, offering ways for everyone to serve and be served. These include:

**Worship:** Acolytes, Choir, Handbells, Lectors, Lay Eucharistic Ministers, Christian Formation, Women's Bible Study, Cursillo

**Service and Care:** Inreach, Outreach, Gratitude Team, Daughters of the King (DOK), Heart and Soil Gardening Ministry, Quilt Guild, Kenya Missioner

**Fellowship:** Hospitality, Greeters, Foyers Groups, Episcopal Church Women (ECW), Episcopal Youth Community (EYC), Men's Group

# Our Community

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Our church community life is vibrant and rich, filling our church year with warm traditions. We host events full of loving family fun, as well as intentional fellowship opportunities for adults. We celebrate our parish birthday, the Bishop's visit, and confirmations with our defining feast— the Annual Pig Roast. Every year, the organizers worry we won't have enough food or enough helpers. Without fail and right on time, the parish becomes a living "fishes and loaves." Tables fill, hands appear, and laughter carries. Here is the real character of St. Matthew's: casual, hopeful, and devoted.

All ages enjoy the fun, with kids tackling the water slide and adults enjoying music, dancing, and fellowship over a shared meal. We host a Rummage Sale, a Chili Cook off, Lessons and Carols, a Nativity Story, and a Mardi Gras celebration. At St. Matthew's, the rhythm of the year is enriched by beloved traditions we eagerly await. These gatherings strengthen our community, making us ready to welcome newcomers into a parish where faith and friendships thrive.





## Worship

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We are known for our warmth and hospitality, a spirit immediately felt on the steps of the church before service begins. Upon arriving at St. Matthew's on a Sunday morning, both newcomers and familiar faces are greeted by enthusiastic parishioners extending genuine welcome. We gather each Sunday at 10:00 a.m. for traditional Holy Eucharist with a full choir. Several times per year, the choir is accompanied by our handbell ensemble. We offer Sunday School for all ages at 9:00 a.m. A Wednesday noon Eucharist sustains the

middle of the week with prayer and fellowship. We look forward to reinstating our two-service Sunday schedule (8:30 a.m. and 11:00 a.m.).

We anchor our music in the 1982 Hymnal. We draw from the Alleluia III songbook and other service music. We love celebrating the traditional liturgy and rejoice in worship across generations. The children's sermon is a treasured moment in our liturgy, drawing smiles throughout the nave.

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*“The King will reply, ‘Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.’*

MATTHEW 25:40

# Our Desires For A New Rector

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With faith, hope, and prayer, we now search for the next rector to join our church family and lead us in continuing to deepen our faith and service to the community. In the latter half of 2025, our Search Committee extensively surveyed the parish and conducted over a dozen listening sessions gathering input on the qualities, gifts, and leadership expected of a new rector.

We pray that the rector will lead us in faith and in the practice of love and acceptance for every member, old and new. We seek a leader who is decisive, fair, receptive to feedback, and skilled in delegating responsibilities. They must clearly articulate their hopes and dreams for our church. The new rector must guide our decision processes, emphasizing unity, grace, and collaboration. They need strong administrative skills, a comprehensive understanding of church operations, and to actively partner with our staff and vestry.

We hope for a loving, accepting, and present rector, who can skillfully balance tradition with modernity

in the church's leadership, worship, and teaching. We desire a rector who will empower us to be effective lay ministers, knowing that every member is essential to a thriving church, committed to spiritual growth and outreach. They must excel at providing pastoral care across multiple generations, especially to our youth. We seek someone who forges meaningful connections across diverse groups and will actively welcome new families with children, sustaining St. Matthew's long and productive future. Ultimately, we pray for a rector who will lead this parish with the same love we have for it. They will share in our joys, walk beside us in faith, and help us grow in Christ's service.

## St. Matthew's Statistics

	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Baptized Members	793	792	816	834	*353
Average Sunday Attendance	240	120	180	180	187
Number of Pledge Units	109	91	100	105	105
Total Income	\$563,757	\$760,983	\$656,967	\$840,352	\$844,967
Annual Expense Budget	\$539,647	\$617,876	\$729,101	\$857,092	\$871,912

Notes: \*The decrease in Baptized Members between 2023 and 2024 is attributed to a reconciliation of church records.

Anticipated mortgage pay-off is April 2026.



## What St. Matthew's Offers

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We are a welcoming, close-knit parish that loves God, each other, and the community we serve. We hold tightly to Episcopal traditions, while staying open to new expressions of faith. We have strong ministries, deep lay engagement, and a hunger for growth. We stand ready to support our new rector with prayer, encouragement, and shared ministry, striving together to walk in Christ's love.



# Madison, Alabama

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St. Matthew's sits in the heart of Madison, Alabama, one of the fastest-growing cities in the state. As part of the Huntsville metropolitan region—recently named Alabama's largest city—the area thrives on STEM careers and military service. Engineers, scientists, defense and aerospace professionals, teachers, medical workers, and entrepreneurs fill this community with both talent and warmth.

Families move here for opportunity and strong schools. They find a modernized Southern hospitality that shapes everyday life, cultivating a deep sense of belonging that welcomes all, regardless of where they are originally from. People build meaningful lives here, deeply investing in their children while keeping a curious eye on the wider world. St. Matthew's mirrors the spirit of our hometown: diverse, energetic, and eager to welcome.



## Episcopal Diocese of Alabama

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The Diocese of Alabama is an engaged, faithful community of over eighty congregations committed to worship, service, and reconciliation. The Diocese fosters strong relationships among clergy and laity, while investing in shared ministries that strengthen local parishes and connect us to the wider Church. Through our diocesan family, we are connected to a rich Anglican heritage and a culture that champions inclusion, fosters healthy growth, and embraces the transforming power of God's grace.



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LUKE 10:27



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